241 Baningha (large white millet or sorghum).

These two types are grown for food, [247] although the large white millet is especially reserved for horses in well-to-do households.

[262 273] Kazinga (large red millet). As a food the poorer Mossi prefer this to the baningha, but it is more especially grown for the making of dam, millet beer.

[256] Mouf (rice) is sought only by the chiefs, notables, and a few families of dakangba (well-to-do men).

Benga (beans).

Souma (peas of either the small green variety or large white or red ones).

Niouyan (from niouri, "yam"), grown only in certain areas.

Nangouri or sounkama (peanuts).

Pèsça (fabirama) [a tuber plant].

Sinni or sili (sesame), grown only by a few people who like it.

Bito (sorrel), used in preparing the sauce served with sagbo.

Mana (gombo [okra]) is also cultivated.

Aside from its food crops, each family has its own plot for cotton (lamdo) which provides for the clothing needed during the year.

311 178 I am told that fields are much more extensive today than in former times, in spite of the abolition of slavery. This is explained by the fact that many areas supposed to be haunted were formerly left uncultivated. It is said, however, that the Moaga used to grow larger crops since in those days he was closer to the soil.

[248] At the present time there is a lack of farm hands. As [857] recently as twenty years ago, the young Moaga followed his parents to the field as soon as he was six or seven years old. He took a liking to the work at a very young age. Before the French [484] occupation, the Moaga rarely left his village because of the dangers on the roads, frequented in those days by bandits (usually descend- [579] ants of naba). People were even afraid to go into the bush alone, for fear of being attacked, captured, and reduced to slavery.

● 433 178 There was little contact even between adjoining villages. At Ouagadougou, no one ventured from section to section unless he had very good reason and was armed to the teeth. In short, everyone

433 made do with what his own village could produce, and there was
178 really no trade in the ordinary sense of the word. The Moaga, essentially a stay-at-home, depended on the soil for food and clothing.

241 Only two new crops have been added since the coming of the
177 French: yams (na-niouyan, "chiefs' yams") and white potatoes.

The recent increase in the cultivation of cotton makes it easier for the natives to meet their tax, and this encourages them to grow even more.

178 The French occupation has brought many benefits in its wake (creation of a network of roads, peace and the resulting free circulation among the villages, and suppression of banditry and looting), but it has also given the Moaga a desire to leave the country.

167 The extensive recruitment of [249] laborers for the needs of other colonies in the area, for work on the roads, and for the now
464 obligatory military service -- all of which are accepted reluctantly by the Mossi -- has caused many young men to emigrate.

Some of them set out, for the Gold Coast preferably, without the slightest means of support. They go to work in the English colony in order to earn money for clothes. Since they had no money when they started out, they remain there for months or even years, and this seriously diminishes the agricultural labor force at home. It also forces their old and helpless relatives to cultivate their fields alone.

Besides, so many of them never return!

The Native Diet

262 Sagbo (millet mush) is the principal item in the Mossi diet at all social levels. Rice, regarded as a luxury food, is eaten by the
[435] naba and notables. It costs from two and a half to three francs a kilogram at Ouagadougou and is therefore too expensive for most people. It may be added that it rarely is found in the diet of civil service employees.

264 Mossi chiefs usually have two main meals a day: a [250] first meal of sagbo or rice at around nine in the morning, and a second

222 137 261 Séba is a kind of long, poisonous, black turnip which is eaten only in times of famine and after protracted cooking.

Seba and vidiba caused the death of many people during the last Mossi famine by giving them dysentery.

137 231 /511/ As for wild fodder found in Mossi territory, there is first of all kénibédo, that grows in bunches 30 centimeters high in damp hollows. Its leaves are rudimentary. It is severed 20 centimeters from the ground and stored during the dry season.

Then there are the fodder plants belonging to the papilionaceous family, densa and youbenga. The tiny stem of densa or youbenga is not severed from the plant itself, which reaches a height of 0.30 or 0.40 meter in both cases. Horses eat them either green or dry, indiscriminately.

137 314 283 Finally, let us say a word about souga, a sort of wild hemp called thus by the Mossi. The Nounouma call it boupo, and the Kassouna bénédévio. It is found only in certain parts of Mossi territory, but it grows throughout Gourounsi lands. Its bark yields very tough white fibers which the natives use in the manufacture of rope, string or thread for fishing implements. The bark does not keep through the dry season, so it is reduced to fibers during the rainy season. The fibers, on the other hand, can take the most intensive dryness without deteriorating. Souga is not cultivated.

222 433 We are now finished with Mossi gathering activities. They have a certain importance, as we have just seen, the same one on the whole as in other Sudanese populations. They are infinitely less important than cultivation, of course, but only slightly less so than stockbreeding, and they must be placed on the same level as the hunt. They are far more important than fishing or arboriculture.

245 433 The latter deserves no real mention. It hardly exists among the Mossi. It is limited to what we described earlier about the rônier and to the planting, here and there, of a few papaw trees.

433 In short, cultivation comes first, with stockbreeding trailing far behind, then gathering and hunting on the same level, then fishing and finally arboriculture.

090 /512/ Industries flourish among the Mossi. We shall review one by one, in detail, the various trades they exercise.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Pre-World War II Period]

their younger sons to become Moslems, and soon abandoned their active resistance to Islam.

Hesling did not permit the Mossi chiefs to revive their traditional religio-political rituals and ceremonies such as the Tense, but he continued to tolerate the Basgha. The French banned the Mossi market chiefs, because they believed (with some justification) that these officials used their offices to procure revenue for the chiefs. The difficulty was that the market chiefs were also responsible for arranging sacrifices to the market deities, which in the absence of such sacrifices would not protect the people from quarrels and violence in the market place. Some chiefs covertly retained their market chiefs; others obeyed the administration and remained anxious over the behavior of their subjects in the market. In general, however, most Mossi chiefs tried to adjust to the religious changes that were taking place, and sought to maintain at least surface amicability with all religious groups. Commenting upon the behavior of the Mogho Naba in this regard, Dim Delobson states:

> The Mogho Naba, above all, is a believer in animism like all his subjects, and it is hard to understand how he manages to reconcile his fetishism with the complex dogmas of Islam and with the many interdictions of Christianity. However, the Mogho Naba is quite capable of being a Catholic or a Moslem on appropriate occasions, while at the same time respecting the traditions of his ancestors. Thus, when the Christians are celebrating Christmas, the emperor of the Mossi devoutly attends midnight Mass. Nevertheless, he wears his fez [really the bonnet which is the symbol of his office], just as the bishop wears his miter. He likewise embraces Islam for the three Moslem festivals.[47]

Hesling failed in his attempt to develop the Upper Volta as a viable colony, and many of the chiefs whom he had used as his auxiliaries lost not only a great deal of power but also a great deal of prestige in the eyes of their subjects because of the role they had played vis-à-vis the administration. By 1929 the economy of the Upper Volta was in poor condition: cotton production had declined; taxes (raised from 5,800,000 francs in 1921 to 18,274,000 francs in 1927 and scheduled to be raised to 26,400,000 francs in 1930) were unbearable; many of the roads that were too extensive, too little used, and too difficult to maintain had been abandoned; and more than 46,000 laborers who had worked in the cotton fields and on the roads had fled to the neighboring Gold Coast.[48] The Colonial Minister, Sarraut, ordered that the colony of the Upper Volta be dismembered. He states in his decree of September 1932 that the suppression of the Upper Volta "would permit appreciable savings, and would make the adminis-

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

CHAPTER 9

Trade and Markets Among the Mossi People

BY ELLIOTT P. SKINNER

The Mossi represent the dominant population of the Voltaic Republic, numbering about 1,600,000 out of some 3,200,000 inhabitants. They represent the unique example of a group which has preserved its ethnic identity and political autonomy through all the vicissitudes of Sudanic history until it was conquered by the French in 1896. Tradition records that the people who became the Mossi left the Dagomba region in present-day Ghana during the eleventh century and moved into the bend of the Niger River, carving out three large kingdoms and smaller principalities in the process. At the head of these still extant kingdoms are rulers *(Moro Nabas)* who formerly held feudal-like control over the provinces, districts and villages which comprise their domains. The villages, with their patri-local, polygynous, extended family households, formed the basic Mossi settlement pattern. A complex hierarchical administrative apparatus carried the power of the Mossi rulers into the smallest villages, and funneled taxes and tribute back to them. This structure still exists, but of course it has been modified by the French.

The Mossi were and are still divided into stratified royal, noble and commoner patrilineages. Characteristic of this lineage system is a process by which royal sub-lineages descend serially until they merge with the mass of commoner lineages. Below the lineages there once were large non-Mossi groups of serfs and slaves, but these people have now been grouped into lineages and have become Mossicized.

The topography of Mossi country is typical of the Sudanic grasslands. It is an immense plain, some 1,500 feet above sea level and broken only by three low mountain ranges and numerous small hills. The annual total rainfall is between 30 and 40 inches, and falls almost entirely as heavy showers or thundershowers during the period from June to September. So narrow is the margin of rainfall for successful crop cultivation that any variation in the cycle results in low crop yields and a difficult "hungry period" the following year before the new crops are harvested. The Mossi do not practice irrigation, and would have trouble doing so because the three Volta Rivers which drain their territory serve as drainage chiefly during the rainy season. Only the Black Volta has water all year round; the

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

439 complained to the district chief. Unfortunately for them the district
648 chief was absent, but his assistants did send out a call for the village chief. However, the chief refused to appear, saying that he would only do so when the district chief returned. The last thing I saw was the agents leaving the district chief's compound still unsatisfied with the whole affair." The sequel to this comes from my notes for December 26, 1955. "I inquired about the aftermath of the contraband case and was told that the whole affair is being referred to the courts at Abidjan. If the village chief is found guilty, he will have to pay a fine of 10,000 francs for the first ass and 3,000 francs for each subsequent ass, or in lieu of this go to jail. Informant said that since the village chief is a poor man, he would probably go to jail."

439 In spite of the contraband, the actual volume of trade appears to
● 433 be considerable. The production, trade and export of goods largely produced by the Mossi people in 1954 are set forth in Table 29.

TABLE 29

Production, Trade and Export of the Mossi (1954)

Product	*Amount*	*Export*	*Destination*
Almonds	35,000 tons	5,602	France and African countries
Peanuts	50,000 tons	3,031	France and African countries
Cattle	1,560,000 tons	101,000	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast
Sheep and Goats	2,115,000 tons	238,255	Ghana, Togo and Ivory Coast

439 These figures do not include the numerous items that drift over
167 the frontiers of Ghana and the Ivory Coast with the thousands of
464 migrants who go to these places each year. While the actual number of such migrants is difficult to ascertain, Pierre Dufour believes that it is "about 150,000 men per year, of whom 100,000 go to the Gold Coast and 50,000 to the Ivory Coast". (Dufour 1956 : 3). And since almost every one of these migrants takes with him some trade item such as a chicken or two, a small sheep or goat, a small sack of cereal or other vegetable produce or a few bands of cotton to defray part of his transportation costs, the amount of goods actually exported is
439 considerable. These statistics rarely enter into the account of goods
167 exported from Mossi country, since custom officers do not usually tax
464 migrants for small items, and do not make any record of them. Of
648 course, when the migrants carry large loads, these are recorded and the migrants must pay export taxes.

Greater attention is paid to the goods which those migrants who work in Ghana (but not in the Ivory Coast) bring back with them after one season or after several years of work, since the government of the Voltaic Republic derives a great deal of its tax revenue from duties on these goods.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*